

## Bridge Squeezes II

P. A. Tobias 6/4/2016

We start by reviewing *Simple Squeezes* before moving on to *Double Squeezes*.

Remember that you have a Simple Squeeze whenever you have “**BLUE**”.

**B**: One defender has **Both** controls stopping your *Threat Cards* from becoming winners. In other words, this defender is **Busy** in two suits and his partner cannot help.

**L**: You have winners for all remaining tricks but one – just 1 **Loser** left (*the count has been rectified!*)

**U**: At least one of your threats lies in the **Upper** hand (the hand above (or after) the defender being squeezed).

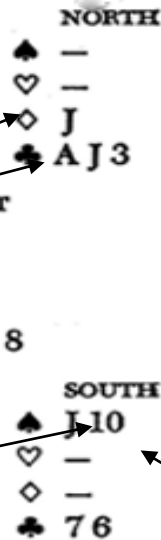
**E**: You have **Entries** to get to any winner that has been established after the squeezed defender is forced to throw a control.

Whenever you have **BLUE**, it is possible to make a trick appear out of nowhere by squeezing one opponent. This can even happen when declarer gets down to one loser and runs his long suit without even knowing who guards which threats – so don’t concede a loser without first playing for something good to happen when defenders have to make a lot of discards.

Let’s start by showing an end position for a simple squeeze.

In the following end positions the contract is Spades or Notrump, South to lead, one defender's hand worthless.

Example



Both Threats are *U*pper, including an *E*ntry.

West has *B*oth Controls and is squeezed.

The second Spade Winner is the Squeeze Card.

One *L*oser left.

You are down to one *L*oser and West has *B*oth controls. North has 2 *U*pper threats and an *E*ntry. When you play the J and 10 of spades, West is squeezed. Note that you could switch the J♦ and the 6♣ and the squeeze would still work with just 1 upper threat.

But, what if different opponents have controls for each of your two threat cards and you also have a third suit they both have stoppers in but they are forced to give up these stoppers to keep your threat cards from becoming winners. That is what happens with a “*Double Squeeze*”.

### The Double Squeeze

In the next diagram, each defender has a control that stops one of your threats from winning and both defenders also have stoppers in a third suit, called the *common* suit. Again, you have *rectified the count* so you have all the tricks off the top except one. The following diagram (from Wikipedia) demonstrates the basics of a double squeeze.

♠ A2			
♥ K			
♦ -			
♣ -			
♠ Q3	♠ K9		
♥ A	♥ -	N	E
♦ -	♦ Q	W	S
♣ -	♣ -	S	N
♠ 6			
♥ -			
♦ J			
♣ 2			

South has the lead. When the two of clubs is played, West has to keep his ace of hearts (menaced by dummy's king) and gives up his spade guard (spades being the common or "Both" threat). In the same trick East is squeezed in spades and diamonds and also must pitch a spade. The A and lowly 2 of spades win the last two tricks! The hand with the common suit both defenders have stoppers in is North and we define threats and controls from North's (or the hand with the common suit) perspective. Thus the A♥ is the **right hand control** and the Q♦ is the **left hand control**.

In order for a double squeeze to work, the common suit must have at least 1 entry (the A♠ in this case).

### What do we need for a Double Squeeze to work?

All double squeezes involve *three* suits that contain threats. One threat is protected solely by one opponent; a second is protected solely by the other opponent; and a third threat, which we call the *common* or *both* threat, is protected by both opponents. The common threat *must be accompanied by an entry in its own suit*.

For the sake of discussion, assume now that South has the common threat. The threat protected by South's right-hand opponent will be called the *right* threat, and the one protected by South's left-hand opponent will be called the *left* threat. Remember that this orientation is relative to the hand with the common threat.

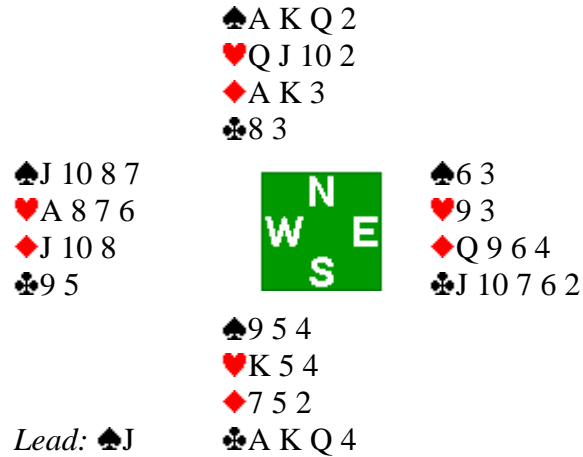
If South has the common threat, *North must hold the left threat*. The reason is that if South also held the left threat, both threats against West would lie in front of him (violating "U") and South is squeezed before the defender discards. The right threat may be in either hand. **Note: the double squeeze always fails if both threats and the common suit are in the same hand**

Based on these definitions above, **a general rule is available that works for all double squeezes:**

First cash the right winners\*- these are for the suit guarded by the player to the right of the hand with the common threat, then cash all the winners in the hand with the common threat except those in the common suit.

\*Unless this suit provides the *only* entry to the hand opposite the common threat.

### 6 NT by South

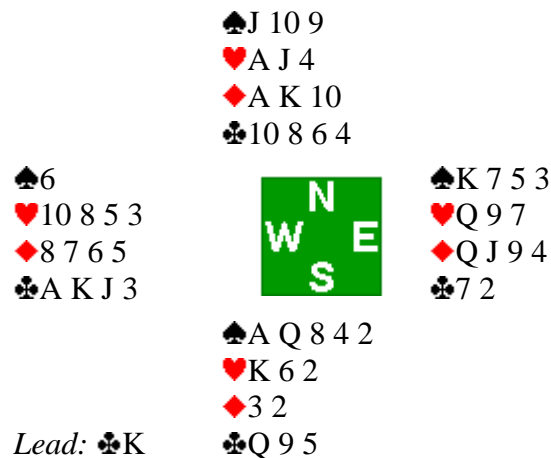


You win the ♠ Q and attack hearts to drive out the ace. Assume West takes the third round (East pitches a club) and then switches safely to the ♦ J, won by the king. You next cash a second spade in case the 10 falls doubleton.

Let's examine the threats: It is likely that both opponents can stop diamonds so this will be the common suit, and its threat lies in North (the ♦3), along with the mandatory entry. It appears that West, if anyone, protects spades (right threat). The club layout is not clear, but the odds favor the length to be with East, so that will be the left threat.

To follow the rule, cash the top spade (right suit winner, since North has the common threat) as East pitches a diamond. Next lead the last heart, which squeezes East out of his diamond stopper (you pitch a diamond). Finally, lead the top clubs to squeeze West in spades and diamonds (the ending for this double squeeze is a simple squeeze against West). Note that this squeeze operates on each defenders when different tricks are played (squeezes can be simultaneous or happen at different tricks!). The ♦3 is your 12<sup>th</sup> trick.

**4 ♠ by South**



Assume West begins with three rounds of clubs, and East ruffs the third. East then leads the  $\heartsuit Q$ , won by the king. You next win the  $\spadesuit J$  and  $\spadesuit 10$ , as East ducks and West pitches a diamond.

You know that West protects clubs, and East protects diamonds (else the  $\heartsuit Q$  lead would be stupid). Therefore, the common suit will be hearts, and its threat must be the  $\heartsuit 6$  (not the jack) because you cannot have all your threats in the same hand. Hence, clubs is the left suit, and diamonds is the right suit.

If you next led a third spade, you would fail because your last right winner ( $\heartsuit A$ ) would remain uncashed. To avoid this kind of hang-up, follow the rule. Cash the  $\heartsuit A$ , and then run the spades. On the fourth spade you will discard a heart from dummy. On the last spade, West will be squeezed first; he must keep the  $\clubsuit J$ , so he gives up his heart stopper as you pitch the  $\clubsuit 10$ , which has served its purpose. East now feels the pressure; he must keep the  $\heartsuit Q$ , so he also gives up his heart stopper. The last trick will be won by your  $\heartsuit 6$ . This is much better than taking a heart finesse since it works no matter who has the  $\heartsuit Q$ !

### 3 NT by South

$\spadesuit 6 5$											
$\heartsuit A 6 4 2$											
$\heartsuit Q 3 2$											
$\clubsuit A Q J 5$											
$\spadesuit J 8 7 3$	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		$\spadesuit K 10 9 2$
	N										
W		E									
	S										
$\heartsuit Q J 10 8$		$\heartsuit 9 7$									
$\heartsuit 10 8 5 4$		$\heartsuit 7 6$									
$\clubsuit 10$		$\clubsuit K 9 8 6 3$									
	$\spadesuit A Q 4$										
	$\heartsuit K 5 3$										
	$\heartsuit A K J 9$										
<i>Lead: <math>\heartsuit Q</math></i>	$\clubsuit 7 4 2$										

Assume it is matchpoints, so overtricks are important. Duck the first heart, win the next with the  $\heartsuit K$ , and then finesse in clubs. Assume East wins and shifts to a spade (too late, thank you); win the  $\spadesuit Q$  then lead a club to dummy as West pitches a spade.

The common suit is spades, the left suit is hearts, and the right suit is clubs. Cash the  $\clubsuit A$  and run the diamonds. The last diamond squeezes West out of his spade stopper, as you discard the low heart from dummy; then a heart to the ace squeezes East in the black suits for 11 tricks (your last trick is the 4 of spades or the 5 of clubs, depending on what East holds).

### 4♥ by South

	♠A 8 6 3	
	♥A 3 2	
	♦6 4 3	
	♣K 5 3	
♠K Q 10 7 4		♠J 9 5
♥8 5		♥6 4
♦A K		♦Q 9 8 7 5
♣J 10 8 4		♣Q 9 7
	♠2	
	♥K Q J 10 9 7	
	♦J 10 2	
Lead: ♦K	♣A 6 2	

West, who bid spades, leads the ♦K, ♦A, which shows a doubleton in their methods. West next leads the ♠K, which you duck (to rectify the count!), then the ♣J. You correctly win the ♣A to keep an entry to dummy. Draw trumps, ending in dummy; cash the ♠A (important) to pitch a club, ruff a spade, and finish the trumps. The last trump will squeeze West then East.

A final hand illustrates both simple and double squeezes.

### 6NT by South

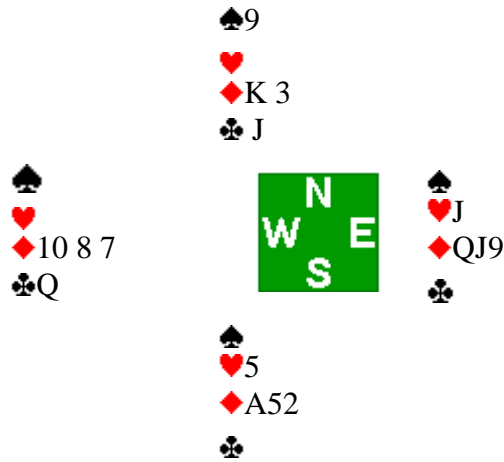
	♠AKQJ109	
	♥6 4 2	
	♦K 3	
	♣J 5	
♠8 7 4		♠2
♥8		♥J1097
♦10 8 7 4		♦QJ96
♣KQ1096		♣874 3
	♠653	
	♥AKQ53	
	♦A52	
Lead: ♣K	♣A2	

You see you have 12 top tricks and 1 more if hearts split 3-2. So, you win the first trick. Now, assuming West also has the ♣Q, you have to be able to make all the tricks!

Why? First you play the ♥A and ♥K. If both follow, you claim. If East shows out you know that West has both controls keeping your threat cards (the ♥5 and the ♣J) from being good. You have all the conditions for **BLUE** as long as you do not cash your third heart winner – that is the **E**nter. Cash

all other winners, ending in dummy. Dummy has the ♥6 and the ♣J, you have the ♥Q5 and West must either give up his heart control or the ♣Q.

But, what if, as shown above, East has the 4<sup>th</sup> round heart control. Then, all conditions for a double squeeze are in place with declarer's third diamond (the ♦5) the common threat card. Follow the rule and cash your last right winner (the ♥Q) and then all the spades. At the point where you play dummy's last spade the cards are:



On the lead of the ♠9 East must throw a diamond or else your ♥5 is good. You now pitch the useless ♥5, saving 3 diamonds. West now must also pitch a diamond or else your ♣J is good.

Your ♦K, ♦A and ♦5 take the last three tricks!

### The Criss-Cross Squeeze

The Criss-Cross squeeze is a rare and beautiful form of simple squeeze where the entries to each hand are in the threat suit of the opposite hand. Here's an example played by the great player Zia.

Vul: Dir:	♠ J 8 3 ♥ 3 ♦ A Q J ♣ A Q J 10 9 6	
♠ 7 2 ♥ J 10 8 5 2 ♦ 8 7 4 3 ♣ 5 3		♠ K 10 9 6 5 ♥ A Q 9 6 ♦ 5 2 ♣ K 2
	♠ A Q 4 ♥ K 7 4 ♦ K 10 9 6 ♣ 8 7 4 South (Zia)	

At extremely high stakes (hundreds of dollars per IMP), both North-South pairs reached 3NT. Five clubs would have been much easier, but then there would be no story.

Zia's partner opened 1♣. His RHO doubled the 1♣ opening. Zia redoubled, LHO bid 1♥ raised to 2♥ by East. Against 3NT, West led a heart, setting up 4 tricks for the defense. Zia would not be able to set up the clubs.

The opening heart lead went to East's queen and declarer's king. How should Zia play?

He knew from the takeout double that the ♣K would be wrong. He could play for that card to be singleton, but instead Zia played back a heart at trick two!

The defenders cashed four heart winners and the key moment had arrived. West had to play a club through the dummy, but he didn't. He exited with a diamond and that set the stage for the rare crisscross squeeze.

Zia won the diamond in dummy, finessed the ♠Q and ran his diamonds. On the fourth diamond East had to discard in this position:

	♠ J 8 ♥ --- ♦ --- ♣ A	
♠ 7 ♥ --- ♦ --- ♣ 5 3		♠ K 10 ♥ --- ♦ --- ♣ K 2
	♠ A ♥ --- ♦ --- ♣ 8 7	

South (Zia)



What should East keep? If he throws a spade, Zia cashes the ♠A and dummy is good. If East throws a club, Zia plays to the ♣A and then his hand is good. This is called a crisscross squeeze (for obvious reasons)\*.

Of course, this requires reading the distribution, but Zia had enough clues from the bidding and the tempo (squirming) to read the position and score a hard-earned +400.

As already mentioned, a criss-cross squeeze is a variation of the simple squeeze in which the threat suits are split between the 2 hands, and the entry for each threat lies in the other threat suit

In this layout, declarer can cash the diamond ace to squeeze West in the black suits.



Declarer has a club menace in hand and a spade menace in dummy. The criss-cross squeeze is so named because a spade discard by West allows declarer to cash the ♠A and cross to dummy via a club to cash the ♠Q. If West elects to pitch a club instead, then South crosses to dummy's ♣A and returns to hand with a spade to collect his ♣Q.

### 7♣ South

	Dummy	
	♠AK5	
	♥972	
West	♦KJ4	East
♠T963	♣Q953	♠Q82
♥85		♥KJT643
♦9763	South	♦T82
♣842	♠J74	♣7
	♥AQ	
	♦AQ5	
	♣AKJT6	

East opens a weak 2♥ and you reach an ambitious 7♣. West leads the ♥8 and you win with the queen. What chance can you see of thirteen tricks?

Unless the spade queen falls in two rounds, you will have to squeeze East in the major suits. He is certain to hold the sole guard on dummy's ♥9. You must hope that he holds the spade queen, too. A simple squeeze cannot work, because East is sitting over the major-suit lengths in dummy. Only a criss-cross squeeze will be good enough. You cash your winners in the minor suits, arriving at this end position:

	Dummy	
	♠AK5	
	♥97	
West	♦--	East
♠T963	♣--	♠Q82
♥5		♥KJ
♦--	South	♦--
♣--	♠J74	♣--
	♥A	
	♦--	
	♣T	

You lead the last club and throw the ♠5 from dummy. Whichever major suit East unguards, you will be able to disentangle your extra trick.

## The Trump Squeeze

The **trump squeeze** is a variant of the simple squeeze. In a trump squeeze, declarer has a suit that can be established by ruffing, but the defender being squeezed is guarding that suit. However, if he happens to also guard another suit, the squeeze card will force him to unguard one. In some ways, the Trump Squeeze is like a Criss-Cross squeeze where one of the threat winners opposite the threat card is a trump, not a high card in the threat suit.

♠	A	Hearts trump North on lead
♥	—	
♦	A	
♣	K 10 7	
N		♠ Q 9
E		♥ —
S		♦ —
		♣ J 9 8
♠	10 8 3	
♥	2	
♦	—	
♣	3	

This end position illustrates a trump squeeze play. Hearts are trumps, and the lead is in the North hand. Declarer plays the ♦A (the *squeeze card*), discarding the ♠3 from hand, and East has no good discard. If East plays a spade, declarer cashes the ♠A to set up the spade suit, which he can reach with a club ruff after cashing North's ♣K. If East plays a club, declarer cashes the ♣K, ruffs a club, and has the Ace of spades as an entry to dummy.

♠	A	Hearts trump North on lead
♥	—	
♦	J 10	
♣	A	
N		♠ —
E		♥ —
S		♦ K Q
		♣ K Q
♠	10	
♥	2	
♦	—	
♣	J 10	

Here is perhaps the simplest possible example. Assume hearts are trump and both red suit Aces have been played. When declarer leads the ♠A from North, East must drop his guard in one of the minor suits. If he discards a diamond, then declarer ruffs a diamond, setting up the suit and takes the last two tricks with the ♣A and the ♦J.

If East instead discards a club, South cashes the ♣A, ruffs a diamond and enjoys the ♣J for the final trick.

The North card that blocks the Suit A threat (♣A) provides the means of reaching the Suit B threat if it becomes good via ruffing.

To repeat: The key elements are

- A suit that declarer can ruff to set up extra tricks
- An entry to another suit which can also yield extra tricks
- One defender who guards both suits

Another example illustrates the squeeze card (a trump) being led from South (declarer) and East being squeezed.

♠	—	Spades trump South on lead				
♥	—					
♦	A 2					
♣	A K 5 4					
<table border="1"> <tr><td>N</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td></tr> </table>		N	E	S	♠	—
		N				
		E				
		S				
♥	—					
♦	K 9					
♣	J 10 9 8					
♠	8 3					
♥	—					
♦	Q 6					
♣	3 2					

Spades are trump and the lead of the ♠8 squeezes East after South discards a small diamond from dummy. The ♦Q is the blocked threat and clubs can be established by ruffing if the squeeze discards a club.

If East discards a club, South will play the Ace and King of clubs, ruff the third round of that suit and then return to dummy with the ♦A to cash the established club. If East instead elects to bare his ♦K, South will play the two top clubs and the ♦A, dropping the ♦K and then ruffing a club back to hand to win his ♦Q.

### A Trump Squeeze      6♦ by South (From the April 2016 Bulletin)

♠10 9 6		♠7 3				
♥3		♥K 8 7				
♦K Q 9 8 4 2		♦6 5 3				
♣A Q 9		♣8 7 6 5 4				
♠Q J 5 4 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td>N</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	♠A K 8
N						
W						
E						
S						
♥A J 10 9 4	♥Q 6 5 2					
♦7	♦A J 10					
♣3 2	♣K J 10					

Lead: ♥A

South opened 1♣, West bid 2♣ and North used the “Unusual” over “Unusual” convention to show a good hand with diamonds by bidding 2♠. East tried 3♥ but this did not stop South from next bidding 6♦.

Before dummy even hit the table, declarer (John Kranyak) predicted a trump squeeze!

After the A♥ held at trick 1, West led the Q♠.

See if you can visualize how Kranyak played the hand and executed a trump squeeze.

Hint: Make sure you ruff a heart in dummy while pulling trumps – that will make West have to guard both majors. Now cash all dummy’s trumps but 1 and then cash clubs, ending in your South hand. Dummy has 1 trump and the 109 of spades left and declarer has the A of spades and 2 hearts left. What does West have left and what do **you** do next? Play it out and you’ll see how it works. Is there a defense that would have set 6♦?

References: Examples and text borrowed freely from Internet sources (Wikipedia, etc.)

## Simple & Double Squeeze Summary Facts

P. Tobias 6/4/2016

Simple Squeeze: **B** 2 threats and 1 defender has **B**oth controls

**L** Only 1 **L**oser left (Count is *rectified*)

**U** At least 1 of the threats is above (**U**pper) the defenders control

**E** You have an **E**ntry to any threat that becomes established

If you have **BLUE**, then you can get an extra trick by playing your winners.

Double Squeeze: *No one defender controls 2 threats alone but each control one threat. You have a third threat, called the **Common Threat** that both control. Call the threat controlled to the right of your common threat (which can be either in declarer's hand or in dummy) the **Right Threat** and the other threat is the **Left Threat**. The requirements are:*

- **You cannot have both Right, Left and Common threats in the same hand.**
- **The Common Threat must have an Entry**

Use these requirements to help identify where the Common Threat must be (dummy or declarer). Then get down to just one loser (**L**) and follow this order for cashing winners:

**First cash the right winners- these are in the suit guarded by the player to the right of the hand with the common threat, then cash all the winners in the hand with the common threat except those in the common suit.** (Note: The only rare exception to this occurs when you need a right winner as an entry).

Each defender will be squeezed out of their Common Threat control, not necessarily on the same trick!